

many) for drawing a dark picture of our country, it may safely be affirmed that the bulk of the people were never better educated or had more religious advantages—that they were never as a body freer from the dominion of gross vices, or animated by feelings of healthier patriotism. All this and much more is at hand to kindle within us cheering hopes. May He who ruleth among the nations guard them from disappointment; may every pious and patriotic hand help on the work of healthy progress, and may the papers which we propose henceforth to place weekly in the hand of the reader be instrumental in hastening on the true jubilee of the people!

H. D.

SIR JOHN FRANKLIN'S FIRST JOURNEY IN THE POLAR REGIONS.

SIR JOHN FRANKLIN is, in a very painful respect, the hero of the day. Is he alive, or has he perished? and if alive, where is he? are questions which pass from lip to lip, and are eagerly discussed by the tender-hearted around their firesides, and by the learned in their scientific societies. What has been done to solve these questions, and what remains to be done, we shall take an early opportunity of informing our readers. Meanwhile we may deepen the public interest in the fate of Sir John and his companions by recalling the tale of the sufferings which he endured in his first Polar journey. The object of that expedition was to determine the latitudes and longitudes of the northern coast of North America, and the trending of that coast from the mouth of the Copper Mine river to the eastern extremity of that continent. And along with Captain Franklin were men well qualified to turn the expedition to the best account for both commercial and scientific purposes.

The Expedition embarked at Gravesend on the 23rd of May, 1819, on board the ship *Prince of Wales*, belonging to the Hudson's Bay Company. On the 25th July they entered Davis's Straits, and on the 7th of the following month they had an earnest of those perils which thickened around them, and almost overwhelmed them at a later period. Their ship struck violently on a point of rocks projecting from the island of Resolution. A gentle swell freed them from their perilous situation, but the current hurried them along in contact with the rocky shore, and the prospect was most alarming. Three times were they driven on the rocky termination of the projecting cliff, and as often were they extricated by the swell and the breeze. Before they had made much progress, however, the ship was violently forced by the current against a large iceberg lying aground. Their peril was now more alarming than ever. After the first concussion, the ship was driven along the steep and rugged side of this iceberg with such amazing rapidity, that the destruction of the masts seemed inevitable, and every one expected they should again be forced on the rocks in the most disabled state, a result which must have been decisive. And now began a three days' contest between the pumps and the leaks, which happily ended in the preservation of the ship.

There is no part of the proceedings and adventures of this expedition that is not deeply interesting. Their visits to the forts of the Hudson's Bay Company, their river and lake voyagings, their notices of the Esquimaux and Indian tribes, their observations in science and natural history, are all worthy of a fresh record. But our only object at present is to give some idea of the difficulties which they encountered on their return land journey from the Arctic Sea, in company with the sixteen Canadian voyagers who had assisted them in their toils. And to accomplish this we overleap all intervening events, and pass on at once to the month of August, 1821, when their Arctic voyage terminated.

At the first rapid on Hood's River the party deposited in a tin box a letter containing an outline of their proceedings, the latitude and longitude of the principal places, and the course they intended to pursue. The morning of their final departure on their way to Point Lake, which was distant in a straight line 149 miles, was warm and fine. Their luggage consisted of ammunition, nets, hatchets, ice chisels, astronomical instruments, clothing, blankets, three kettles, and two canoes, which were each carried by one man. The officers carried such a portion of their own things as their strength would permit; the weight borne by each man was about ninety pounds, and with this they advanced at the rate of about a mile an hour, including rests. In the evening the hunters killed a lean cow out of a large drove of musk-oxen; but the men were too much laden to take away more than a small portion of its flesh. Their daily travel for some time was about five, eight, and ten miles. The weather varied, being sometimes fine, but more frequently alternating between drenching rain and drifting snow. On the 6th of September, their tents were completely frozen, and the snow had collected around them to a depth of three feet, and even in the inside there was a covering of it to the extent of several inches on their blankets. Their suffering from cold in a comfortable canvas tent in such weather will easily be imagined; it was, however, less than their suffering from hunger, for their provisions had now nearly failed. The next day, fearing that the winter had set in with all its rigour, and that by longer delay they should only be exposed to an accumulation of difficulties, they started, although in a very unfit condition, being weak with fasting, and their garments being stiffened with frost. Just as they were about to commence their march, Captain Franklin was seized with a fainting fit in consequence of exhaustion and sudden exposure to the wind; but after eating a morsel of portable soup, he recovered so far as to be able to move on. The ground was covered a foot deep with snow, the margin of the lakes was incrustated with ice, and the swamps over which they had to pass were entirely frozen, but the ice not being sufficiently strong to bear them, they frequently plunged knee-deep in water. Those who carried the canoes were often blown down by the violence of the wind, and at other times fell from making an insecure step on a slippery stone. On one of these occasions, the largest canoe was so much broken as to be rendered utterly unserviceable. This was felt to be a serious disaster, as the remaining canoe, having been made by mistake too small, it was doubtful whether it would be sufficient to carry the party across a

river. As the accident could not be remedied, they turned it to the best account by making a fire of the bark and timbers the broken vessel, and cooked the remainder of their portable soup and arrow-root. This was a scanty meal after three days' fasting, but it served to allay the pangs of hunger, and enabled them to proceed at a quicker step than before. From the depth of the snow they were compelled to march in Indian file, that is, in each other's steps. A distant object in the direction they wished to take, was pointed out to the man who took the lead, and one of the officers followed immediately behind him to renew the bearings and keep him from deviating more than could be helped from the mark. They proceeded in this manner throughout their route across the "barren grounds."

The first river which had to be crossed by means of the single canoe presented a formidable obstacle. The small vessel was found extremely ticklish, but it was managed with much dexterity by three men who ferried over one passenger at a time, causing him to lie flat in its bottom, by no means a pleasant position, owing to its leakiness. This operation occupied the greater part of a day.

About noon of the 10th of September, the weather cleared up a little, and to their great joy they saw a herd of musk-oxen grazing in a valley below them. The party instantly halted, and the best hunters were sent out; they approached the animals with the utmost caution, no less than two hours being consumed before they got within gun-shot. "In the mean time," says Sir John Franklin, "we beheld their proceedings with extreme anxiety, and many prayers were doubtless offered up for their success. At length, they opened their fire, and we had the satisfaction of seeing one of the largest cows fall; another was wounded, but escaped. This success infused spirit into our starving party. To skin and cut up the animal was the work of a few minutes. The contents of its stomach were devoured upon the spot, and the raw intestines which were next attacked, were pronounced by the most delicate among us to be excellent."

A fortnight later their sufferings were extreme. They picked up some pieces of skin, and a few bones of deer that had been devoured by wolves the preceding spring. The bones were rendered friable by burning, and eaten as well as the skin, and several of the party added their old shoes to the repast. The two men who had charge of the canoe left it behind on the 22nd of September, because, as they said, it was so completely broken by another fall as to be rendered incapable of repair, and entirely useless. "The anguish this intelligence occasioned may be conceived, but cannot be described. Impressed, however, with a conviction of the importance of taking it forward even in the state these men represented it to be, we urgently desired them to fetch it, but they declined going, and the strength of the officers was inadequate to the task. To their infatuated obstinacy on this occasion, a great portion of the melancholy circumstances which attended our subsequent progress may perhaps be attributed. The men seemed now to have lost all hope of being preserved, and all the arguments we could use failed in stimulating them to the least exertion."

Our space renders it impossible to narrate the incidents of peril and trial, of selfishness on the part of some, and of generous heroism on the part

of others, with which the journal overflows. On one occasion, when intercepted by the Copper Mine river, and when every attempt to convey a raft of willows across the stream had failed, Dr. Richardson volunteered to swim across with a line, and to haul the raft over. When about to step into the water he put his feet upon a dagger, which cut him to the bone; but this misfortune could not stop him from attempting the execution of his generous undertaking. He launched into the stream with the line round his middle; but when he had got a short distance from the bank, his arms became numbened with cold, and he lost the power of moving them. Still he persevered, and turning on his back, had nearly gained the opposite shore, when his legs also became powerless, and his friends, to their great alarm, saw him sink. They instantly hauled the line, and he came again on the surface, and was gradually drawn ashore in an almost lifeless state. Before the river was crossed, the party was reduced to great straits. One day a hunter brought in the antlers and backbone of a deer which had been killed in summer. The wolves and birds of prey had picked them clean, but there still remained a quantity of the spinal marrow which they had not been able to extract. This, although putrid, was esteemed a valuable prize, and the spine being divided into portions, was distributed equally. After eating the marrow, which was so acrid as to excoriate the lips, they rendered the bones friable by burning, and ate them also.

Five days were required to make a canoe of the fragments of painted canvas in which the bedding was wrapped, and to obtain pitch enough from the small pines in the neighbourhood to "pitch over" its seams. The canoe being finished, one of the men embarked, and, amidst prayer for his success, reached the opposite shore. The canoe was then drawn back again and another person transported, and in this manner, by drawing it backwards and forwards, they were all conveyed over without any serious accident. All thus safely landed on the southern shores of the Copper Mine river, the spirits of the men immediately revived; each of them shook the officers cordially by the hand, and declared that they now considered the worst of their difficulties over, as they did not doubt of reaching Fort Enterprise in a few days, even in their feeble condition.

Previous to setting out the next day, the whole party ate the remains of their old shoes and whatever scraps of leather they had, to strengthen their stomachs for the fatigue of the day's journey. And after this, when neither animal food nor *tripe de roche*, which had often proved their friend in need, was to be found, their only resource was a cup of tea and "some of their shoes!" One and another now began to fail and fall behind, finding it impossible to proceed. As a last hope, Captain Franklin was induced to push forward with a few of the strongest of the men, in hopes of sending relief from Fort Enterprise to those that were left behind. In a few days the captain, with four men, accomplished this journey, but to their great disappointment found Fort Enterprise desolate. There was no deposit of provisions, no trace of the Indians, no letter to point out where the Indians might be found. "It would be impossible for me (he says) to describe our sensations after entering this miserable abode and discovering how we hap

been neglected; the whole party shed tears, not so much for our own fate, as for that of our friends in the rear, whose lives depended entirely on our sending relief from this place."

The horrors which followed are beyond description. Two of the party sank beneath them, and their companions had not strength sufficient to bury them. In the course of two or three weeks the survivors were joined by Dr., now Sir John, Richardson and a faithful and heroic man named Hepburn. These brought the sad intelligence that four of their detachment had perished, and that there was great reason to conclude that three of the four had died by the hands of the fourth, and that flesh which he had brought to them time after time as the flesh of wolves, was no other than the flesh of their comrades. Mr. Hood, one of the ablest officers in the expedition, was shot by this same murderer while sitting by the fireside. "Bickersteth's Scripture Help was lying open beside the body, as if it had fallen from his hand, and it is probable that he was reading it at the instant of his death." It being evident that the murderer, who was one of the "Canadian voyagers," was watching his opportunity to commit the same atrocity on the two survivors, they felt it necessary, at the moment when he seemed about to spring on his prey, to inflict on him a murderer's doom.

On the 7th of November, ten days after Dr. Richardson's arrival at Fort Enterprise, the party obtained deliverance by the hands of three Indians, who were sent to their relief. Their life had been hitherto sustained at this place by the bones and skins which they dug from beneath the snow, and they procured fire only by tearing up and consuming the floors of their dwelling. And had relief been delayed but a few days longer, the journal intimates that they must all have perished. From this time, mind and body, which had become alike enfeebled, gradually regained strength. The Indians fed them as if they had been children, and treated them with the utmost tenderness and consideration, evincing humanity that would have done honour to the most civilized people. On the 26th of November they were in a condition to remove to an Indian encampment, and on the 11th of December they arrived at Fort Providence, where they were joined by the survivors of Mr. Back's detachment, and were sheltered in comfort and safety for five months, till the advanced spring allowed them to resume their homeward journey. Their faith in Divine Providence had never forsaken them, even in the depth of their miseries, and it proved a stimulus to exertion which nothing else could supply. "Through the extreme kindness and forethought of a lady," says Dr. Richardson, "the party, previous to leaving London, had been furnished with a small collection of religious books, of which we still retained two or three of the most portable, and they proved of incalculable benefit to us. We read portions of them to each other as we lay in bed, in addition to the morning and evening service, and found that they inspired us on each perusal with so strong a sense of the omnipresence of a beneficent God, that our situation, even in these wilds, appeared no longer destitute; and we conversed, not only with calmness, but with cheerfulness; detailing, with unrestrained confidence, the past events of our lives, and dwell-

ing with hope on our future prospects." If Sir John Franklin and his enterprising companions are still safe in their Arctic prison, may the same Providence whose care he has already enjoyed so remarkably, send him help and restore him to a country whose heart throbs with anxiety for his safety!

J. K.

THE OLD YEAR'S LAST HOUR.

It was the 31st of December; the cold winter sun had gone down the sky, every crimson streak had for hours vanished, and the heavens looked like a dome of clear blue crystal, from which the stars were shining out as in their youth, not seeming like other things ever to grow old. I looked from my cottage window for a few moments on this scene of calm and melancholy beauty, and watched the lustrous and diamond-like sparkling of those many, many orbs, and then, amidst the deep silence of that last night of the dying year, I was startled by the rich-toned strokes of the village clock, which through the crisp and frosty air tolled out—deliberately pausing between the strokes—ELEVEN. Chilled by the keen and searching atmosphere, I closed the casement, and sat down in the black oaken chair that had stood beside that hearth so many years, and, stirring up the embers of the logwood fire, mused on the curling, quivering sparks which, like the joys of earth, go out the moment after their brightest flashes. The drowsy ticking of the clock beside the door fell on my ears, and seemed to wind round into my eyes with somniferous effect; and after the shadowy and the real had a little while contended for the mastery, the latter retired and left me in the power of the former, whereby I was gently carried into the realm of dreams.

And I thought I was at sea, on an ocean that was more changeful than even those which roll over so large a portion of this globe—an ocean that strangely passed from calm to storm, and from storm to calm—an ocean, too, that at the same moment presented in close contiguity spaces that were still as an angel's peace, and stormy as a demon's rage. And there were more barques than I could number, some of which were the sport of tempests, and others were sailing over quiet, sunlit waters. But all were moving on—rapidly moving on; and opposite these rose a shore, rock-bound and strong, which spread far away; and on the summit of a bold beetling crag there stood a tower—I never saw a campanelle like that—having a large illuminated dial-plate with stars upon it, and astronomic signs; and as we sailed past it, it struck, and the stroke was startling. It boomed out upon the main like thunder; yet though loud as thunder, it was not rough like thunder, but it had in it a soft melancholy and wailing sound. I wondered greatly at it; and before the echo had died away, I thought I saw with me, in my vessel, another beside myself—not like myself—in form, aspect, and voice far different. Very thoughtful looked he; and gazing in my eyes, he told me that was God's great clock of time, of which the mechanism lay deep in nature, and spread out far and wide with wheels and springs that had been set in motion centuries ago. And he told me how it marked and manifested the flight of years, and